

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting September 24, 2013**

President Spatz called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Present: Spatz, Gates, Sacks, Felton, Traczyk, O'Connor and Brisben  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Policy, Planning and Communications Chris Jasculca, Director of Special Education Mike Padavic, Director of HR Steve Cummins and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

ROLL CALL

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

O'Connor moved, seconded by Gates, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 6:35 p.m. to discuss (Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), Collective Negotiations, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2), Purchase or Lease of Real Property, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5)). Roll call vote.

Ayes: Sacks, Felton, O'Connor, Gates, Traczyk, Brisben, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

OPEN SESSION

Gates moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education move into open session at 7:03 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

The meeting was reconvened at 7:08 p.m.

**SPECIAL REPORTS**

SPECIAL REPORTS

**PRESENTATION OF FY2013 AUDIT**

Therese O'Neill and Brian Guastella from McGladrey, LLP came to the table. A clean copy of the financial statements were distributed. Guastella noted that the revised draft received at the table is complete and will be filed with the state. He acknowledged the Business Office staff for their support in the completion of the process, noted some new accounting standards that were implemented this year and reported that the audit had no findings.

The written report to the Board of Education was discussed. Guastella noted that the revenue numbers are comparable to other district.

Board comments included commending the Business Office staff. Guastella was also acknowledged for his district support.

This item will return to the Board for action on October 8, 2013. It was noted that the auditor's contract will be rebid in the fall.

## 5-YEAR PROJECTIONS

Steve Miller from PMA joined O'Neill at the table. Miller reported on the revenue sources for the FY-2014 budget. President Spatz noted that the audit pie chart and budget pie charts report out differently due to retirement funds. It was noted that the CPI is currently at 1.7 percent. The CPI was at 3 percent last year, and is projected to be at 2.5 percent next year.

Miller noted that general state aid revenue has been relatively static. An increase from when the district moved to full-day kindergarten was noted, however, the state budget has not allowed the state to fully fund this obligation. He noted a very steady growth in enrollment with a slight drop predicted in 2018. Miller reported that about four additional certified staff members will be necessary per year to meet the need. Assumptions of 2.5 percent salary increases were calculated as only one bargaining unit has a contract through next year and 44 teachers are on the retirement track.

The operating fund history and projections were reviewed. It was noted that the low point has moved from fall to spring. Interest was expressed in seeing this recalculated to spring, however, O'Neill noted that FORC agreed to leave it as is until a two-year history of the change could be identified.

Board comments included acknowledging the staff for cutting down on expenses, and noting that although the district is being frugal with spending, the state is not paying the district what was promised. It was noted that Illinois is ranked number 50 of the states for supporting education through tax dollars. The Board was reminded that a referendum will be needed in 2017. The referendum probably will not increase the taxes, but continue for current growth instead of debt payment. Interest was expressed in understanding what is and is not under the district's control; where the district met its targets and where it did not.

It was reported that FORC has done some "what if" scenarios regarding the pension. A three tier approach could be considered in the spring. Interest was expressed in having the FORC identify the actual low point balance and review the 1.25 growth reduction as it was based on different enrollment projections. It would be helpful to see what the projections show based on a per student basis as well as a per dollar basis.

## CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PRESENTATION

Members Brisben and Sacks shared a detailed capital expenditure spreadsheet. They recommended changing the term "facilities" to capital expense. They suggested that this document would help to reduce surprises, allowing the Board and administration time to plan. They reported that discussions have occurred with the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC), the Financial Oversight and Review Committee (FORC) and Therese O'Neill. They recommended breaking the needs into four sections, life safety, core functionality, direct impact on learning and aspirational. Examples and samples were shared, and the importance of the nominating process (scoring) for capital expenditures was noted. They will report back to the Board on January 14, 2014 for action.

O'Neill noted that in the past, parks, furniture, etc., were not included in the capital planning. She explained that some life safety items come with their own scores.

Board comments included noting that a future discussion may need to occur prior to January 14, 2014. The Board was reminded that sometimes the district needs to spend money to determine what an estimated cost will be.

Dr. Roberts encouraged the Board to include the promises made/kept into the equation.

## CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PRESENTATION (Continued)

It was noted that the communications workgroup is working on addressing the community feedback and reporting back to them. The workgroup is also working on updates to the Board Web page and working on a way for the community to share their needs with the Board. The importance of listening to all stakeholders was shared.

## HARVARD REPORT

Holmes School Principal Suzie Hackmiller, Holmes teachers Beth Lacy and Frances Kraft, Irving School Principal John Hodge, Irving teacher Emile Williams, Beye teachers Jennifer Los and Karen Foleno, Shelly Tiwari and Deborah Baness King from Triton Community College, Stephen Jackson from the Oak Park Township, Julie Frey and Amy Hill from the Oak Park River Forest High School, and Diana Rosenbrock from the Collaboration for Early Childhood were in attendance and some came to the table.

It was reported that 19 members of the Oak Park community (7 organizations) attended a Closing the Achievement Gap program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The program was led by Ronald F. Ferguson who has spent 30 years studying the achievement gap. They shared that the goal is achievement and excellence through equity. They expressed the need to raise achievement faster for some children. The E-Team (those who attended) supports the education of all children from cradle to career. The mission is to work as a community to equip all students with skills, competencies and experiences so they are ready to participate in postsecondary education and/or the job economy. They shared the idea of a community based framework to improve student outcomes, noting three key strategies; parent, family and community engagement, instructional leadership and teacher engagement, and student engagement.

The team introduced the concept of family engagement as any way that a child's adult caretaker effectively supports learning and healthy development. When families are engaged, they are supporters, encouragers, monitors, models, advocates, decision-makers and collaborators. It was noted that students who are impacted by family engagement acquire literacy more rapidly, earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher level programs, advance and earn more credits. Additionally, they adapt better to school, attend regularly, exhibit better social skills and behavior, graduate and go on to higher education.

The team reported that the Boston school system has a parent university where parents have the opportunity to sharpen their skills as they work in one of life's most important and demanding roles.

The team noted that the work of educators is always to call for high quality student performance from every student, but also to convince students that they can grow their ability at academics, to show them how and to motivate them to want to. There are six simultaneous approaches, verbal behavior for attribution retraining, motivational structures for self regulated learning, cooperative learning protocols and community building, explicit teaching about brain malleability, key instructional strategies, school policies, practices and programs.

The 7 "C" of teaching practices were identified as; Cares about students, Challenges student to achieve, Controls behavior and keeps students on task, Consolidates knowledge and makes connections, Clarifies lessons so knowledge is feasible, Confers with students and welcomes ideas, and Captivates by making learning relevant. It was noted that when all are present in a classroom learning excels.

## HARVARD REPORT (Continued)

It was shared that the internalized self, persona, reputation and affiliation and pluralistic ignorance are all part of the learning process. The cost of resisting what appears to be norm can be social isolation or worse. Adults need to be culturally competent to help the children be successful. Schools are social environments in which students and educators, each with their own identities and predispositions, work together to make teaching and learning happen. Our community must acknowledge and be respectful of a child's identify, feeling of marginality and culture.

The E-Team identified their tasks as follows:

- Phase 1: Educate community about E-Team and proven strategies
- Phase 2: Build an inventory of current initiatives and share with community
- Phase 3: Gather feedback
- Phase 4: Design an action plan and build an implementation team
- Phase 5: Do the work!

Dr. Roberts shared that the team members were reinforced to believe that it takes a community to turn the gap around. Some of this is helping parents and community know how to navigate the system. He noted that this program was five very full days. He shared that Oak Park was the only group that had such a wide representation. He acknowledged Mary Jo Schuler for her support and reported that the next step is to begin speaking to the PTOs and getting to know each child's social ecology and how it impacts them.

Hackmiller noted that a connection may be made with STRIVE and the possibility of other relevant community partnerships will be considered. She noted that a book of schools that have documented success in this area was shared with participants. She noted that although most are in the Boston area, some of the schools are Illinois high school districts.

Dr. Roberts reported that John Saphier from Research for Better Teaching, Inc. is already working with the district. He noted that this initiative may require some additional funding, but mostly just the reallocation of some current funding and thinking of things in a different way. He noted that the biggest resource the team needs right now is time.

Michelle Harton, former Board President was acknowledged for encouraging the community to remain vigilant in their efforts to close the achievement gap.

Board comments included noting that more information is being shared between the agencies ensuring that the needs of more children are being serviced. The book *Smartest Kids in the World* was recommended. Enthusiasm was expressed about the district working with Dr. Ferguson. The team was reminded that when a district raises the rigor, there is pushback. They were encouraged to hold firm. Interest was expressed in bringing this group back in the future with a report and a timeline. It was suggested that the district may need to budget differently with more visibility in the future. The FYI was suggested as a way to communicate this initiative to the community. A copy of the presentation was requested.

It was noted that the Board is very serious about the achievement gap. Additionally, the ECRA Group will be reporting to the Board on October 22, 2013.

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

Felicia Starks Turner and Harla Hutchinson came to the table. They reported that the 2014 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goal is to have 100 percent proficiency in reading and math. They noted that the targets increase nearly every year. This year's target was 92.5 percent. The cut score for meeting and exceeding was also increased this year.

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE REPORT (Continued)

They reported that districts must test at least 95 percent of student in each subgroup in reading and math. This percentage increased from 92.5 percent in 2013. If the percentage is less than 92.5 percent, confidence interval is applied. If a subgroup did not make AYP the previous year, but decreased the percentage not meeting standards by at least 10 percent, the Safe Harbor provision will allow the school to meet the conditions. Schools must have at least a 92 percent attendance rate.

Starks Turner reported that cut scores were raised this year. She noted that the state has seen a 20 percent decline in the amount of students who fall into the “meets” category.

The Board was reminded that AYP compares different sets of students from year to year and a vast majority of the students show improvement from one year to the next.

It was reported that one District 97 school made AYP in reading and math and nine schools did not make AYP in one or both subjects for one or more subgroups. Holmes School was recognized for making AYP and for the use of their data wall. One school did not make AYP for the third consecutive year and one for the fourth year. The district as a whole did not make AYP for the third consecutive year. Additionally, it was noted that Beye’s reading scores increased this year with the largest group of increases in the black population. The white students at Beye School did not make AYP in math. It was noted that Beye is in State Status year 2; because of this, Choice and SES were offered at Beye and two students took advantage of that option. It was noted that Brooks and Julian are also on State Status. Starks Turner reported that all schools will complete a school improvement plan this year, as they have done in the past. The Rising Star plans will be used for this purpose, focusing on continuous improvement models and on research-based indicators. The district will also engage West40 as a consultant. The schools are working very closely with the parents, building on the common core, and providing more intense learning. The data is being analyzed and plans will be put in place.

Dr. Roberts reminded the Board that the system is in the midst of changes and focusing on the results will be key. He noted that when the teachers challenge students to do more rigorous work, they learn the routine and begin to work harder. He noted that the district needs to reassess and make changes.

Board comments included interest in seeing the ECRA and EXPLORE data. A joint meeting was suggested with the high school to compare data. Interest was expressed in updates on the school improvement plan progress. It was noted that the 2014-2015 school year will be an interesting year as everything will be changing. It was noted that the “meets” bar is now at the lowest level for each grade level, making it significant, and the “exceeds” bar lines up with college readiness. Interest was expressed in seeing a break down of data by subgroups and hearing about how the testing process is the same at every school. Interest was expressed in knowing if there is enough data to prepare a growth model.

President Spatz reminded the Board that District 97 is a great district and they need to not lose sight of that. A benchmark committee has been approved by the Board. This committee will provide data that will be useful moving forward.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joan Radavich, Oak Park resident, expressed a need for transparency on the Board agenda. She shared that item 1.2.3 Capital Expenditures had no supporting documents within the board packet, making the topic unclear. She asked that the Board make sure that attachments are included or provide a more descriptive explanation of agenda items in the future.

**ACTION ITEMS****2.1.1 Approval of Minutes from the September 24, 2013 meeting**

Traczyk moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the minutes from the September 24, 2013 meeting.

Ayes: Traczyk, O'Connor, Felton, Gates, Spatz, and Brisben

Nays: None

Abstain: Sacks

Motion passed.

**2.2 Approval of Consent Agenda**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Spatz, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the consent agenda as presented to the Board.

2.2.1 Bill List

2.2.2 Personnel

2.2.3 Approval of Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trips (Excluding Brook Washington DC trip)

Ayes: Traczyk, Spatz, Felton, O'Connor, Gates, Brisben, and Sacks

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.3.1 Adoption of 2013-2014 Budget**

Traczyk moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education, District 97, adopt its final 2013-14 budget in the total amount of \$88,134,174 as delineated in the memorandum to the Superintendent dated September 24, 2013. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, O'Connor, Sacks, Felton, Gates, Spatz, and Brisben

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.3.2 Resolution of Intent to issue not to exceed \$3,085,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education, District 97, approve the formal resolution declaring the intention to issue Working Cash Fund Bonds of School District Number 97, Cook County, Illinois, for the purpose of increasing Working Cash Fund of said School District, and directing the notice of such intention be published in the manner provided by law. Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Sacks, Gates, O'Connor, Felton, Spatz, and Brisben

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**2.4.1 Acceptance of Donations to the Irving Schoolyard Project from the Irving PTO, Chicago Edge and the American Youth Soccer Organization**

Traczyk moved, seconded by Brisben, that the Board of Education, District 97, gratefully accept \$43,800 from the Irving School PTO, \$50,000 from the American Youth Soccer Association and both a \$15,000 cash donation as well as the soccer goals and installation of those soccer goals from Chicago Edge Soccer. These donations supported the overall Irving Schoolyard Renovation Project. Further, that the Board of Education also approve the preparation of formal thank you acknowledgement for these generous contributions on behalf of the Board and Irving School community. Roll call vote.

The Board expressed their appreciation for these generous gifts.

Ayes: Traczyk, Brisben, Felton, Sacks, Gates, O'Connor, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Motion passed.

### **TOPIC REPORTS**

TOPIC REPORTS

#### **APPROVAL OF SCHOOL RECOGNITION APPLICATIONS**

It was reported that the filing of the School Recognition applications with the state is a required annual activity and will return to the Board for action during the October 8, 2013 Board meeting.

#### **RESOLUTION APPOINTING LEGAL COUNSEL IN CONNECTION WITH TAX RATE OBJECTIONS**

It was reported that this is also an annual requirement and will return to the Board for approval on October 8, 2013 for Board action.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE/WORK GROUP REPORTS**

BOARD COMMITTEE  
/ WORK GROUP  
REPORTS

#### **POLICY REVIEW**

The Policy workgroup met and discussed policies that may be affected by the 1:1 technology initiative. It was reported that the wording of the policies does not need to be changed. Fifteen minutes was requested during the October 8, 2013 Board meeting to share their findings. It was noted that Member Sacks is working on the Board norms and will have drafts available for consideration in the near future. She will send them to the Board for feedback prior to discussion.

#### **FACILITIES UPDATE (FAC)**

It was reported that the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) met and covered several topics. Among those were planning for next year, and the air conditioning concerns which will be included for discussion during the October 22, 2013 Board meeting.

The committee is meeting with the new architect firm, STR on October 2, 2013 and will be asking them for their expertise regarding the air conditioning concerns. The committee will meet again on October 15, 2013. It was noted that STR will be reporting on the capacity study and the needed maintenance on the administration building.

It was reported that a recommendation was made that the district consider 101 Madison Street as a possible location for the administration building.

#### **FINANCE OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW (FORC)**

The Finance Oversight and Review Committee (FORC) met. Most of their meeting was spent vetting the assumptions and projection model shared with the Board earlier this evening.

The committee has been asked if they would be interested in developing a comparison with other districts. The committee members did not think that this would be the best match for their skill-set, however, one committee member offered to help with the Data Dashboard Committee.

It was noted that FORC will make their annual presentation to the Board on October 22, 2013. This report could be moved into November if the Boards calendar does not allow the time in October.

#### **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE (CLAIM)**

It was reported that the CLAIM Committee will be hosting the Legislator Forum at Julian Middle School on Wednesday, October 9, 2013 and everyone was invited. Discussion took place about the CLAIM Data Committee having a conversation with the legislators during the Forum to discuss sharing of data between elementary and high school districts. It was noted that the Forum may not be structured in a way to support an in depth conversation.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE (CLAIM) (Continued)**

The IASB delegate assembly meeting report was distributed. Vice President Gates will send out a reminder for Board members to respond to this document.

**SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION**

Vice President Gates distributed two documents for discussion. After discussion, it was agreed that the Superintendent’s Evaluation Document will return for action on October 8, 2013.

The Superintendent’s bonus language was tabled until October 8, 2013. Board members who did not submit comments on this document were reminded to do so.

**MADISON STREET PROPERTIES / TIF**

It was reported that the next meeting with the Village is scheduled on October 11, 2013.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

No report was shared at this time.

**BOARD CONCERNS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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Member Brisben attended the Collaboration for Early Childhood event on professional development. He reported that the Collaboration is bringing all the providers of early childhood care together and working toward the same standards for all.

Member Sacks attended the Oak Park Education Foundation meeting. She reported that the Foundation is hiring a communication and marketing person and noted that they have two event coming up; the Partners Appreciation event on October 23, 2013 and their first fund raiser to be held on November 21, 2013 at Fitzgerald’s.

It was suggested that the Board agenda be organized in a way that the items with the most people in the audience would be presented first. It was noted that items that require out-of-district presenters are placed first on the agenda. This agenda was an exception as there were several items that met the criteria. Interest in receiving the presentations in advance was expressed.

Interest was expressed in working with Ron Ferguson. It was noted that Ferguson is a big supporter of student surveys.

Interest was expressed in having the PTO Council receive the Harvard Report.

It was reported that the IASB West Cook Dinner meeting is next Monday evening.

President Spatz will be attending the kickoff meeting of the ISBE District Data Advisory Committee in Springfield.

**RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

**RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT**

President Spatz acknowledged the need for transparency and agreed to add a description if presentations are not available at the time the Board packet is posted. He noted that members of the community are always welcome to send an email to the Board and ask for clarity on agenda items.

**BOARD TIMELINE**

**BOARD TIMELINE**

The Board timeline was reviewed and revised.

**PREVIEW AGENDA FOR THE OCTOBER 8, 2013 MEETING**

**PREVIEW AGENDA FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETING**

The draft agenda for the October 8, 2013 meeting was reviewed and revised.



**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

O'Connor moved, seconded by Traczyk, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 10:57 p.m. to discuss (Collective Negotiations, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)). Roll call vote.

Ayes: O'Connor, Traczyk, Sacks, Felton, Gates, Brisben, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

Sacks moved, seconded by O'Connor, that the Board of Education move into open session at 11:22 p.m. All members of the Board in attendance were in agreement.

OPEN SESSION

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct, President Spatz declared the meeting adjourned at 11:24 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, October 8, 2013 beginning at 7 p.m. at the Administration building located at 970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

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Board President

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Board Secretary